

The President's Daily Brief

29 November 1971

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

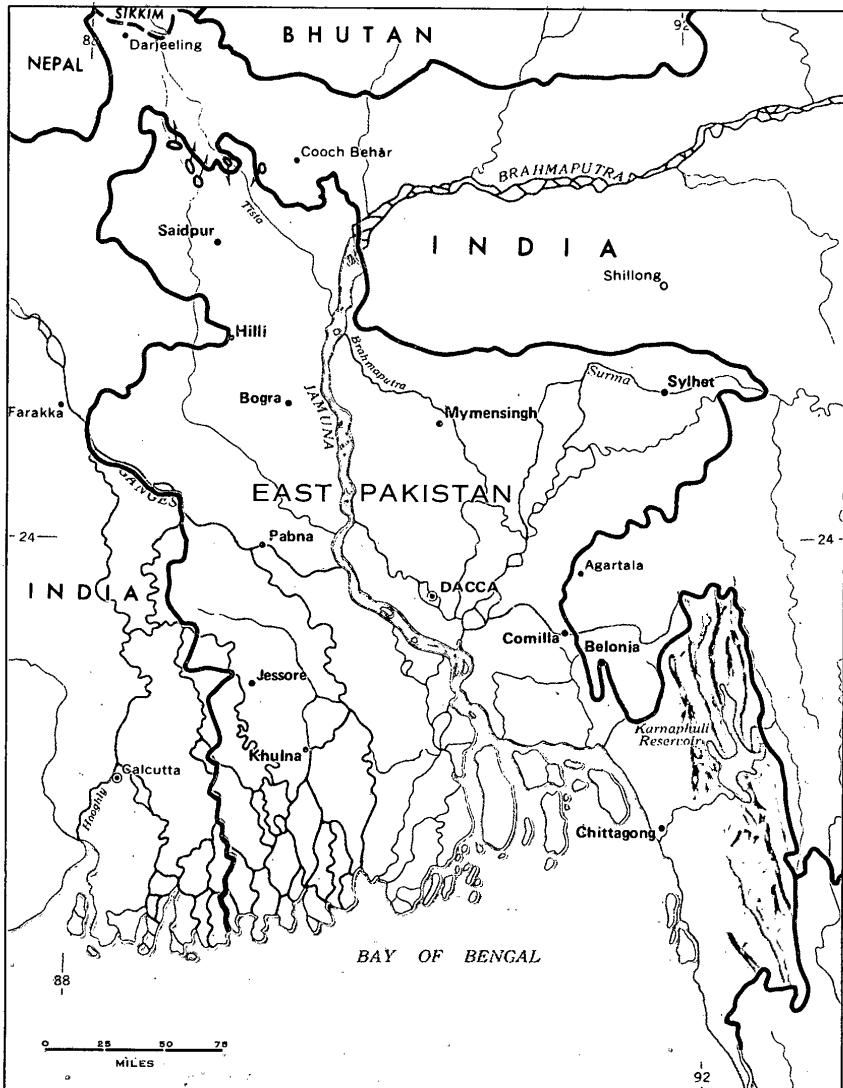
The latest military and diplomatic moves in the Indo-Pakistani situation are discussed on *Page 1*.

The assassination of Jordanian Premier Wasfi Tal adds new strains to already troubled inter-Arab relationships, especially between Amman and Cairo. (*Page 3*)

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations gingerly endorses neutralization as a long-term regional goal. (*Page 4*)

Four more Soviet TU-16 Badger aircraft have arrived at Aswan in Egypt for a total of 13. (*Page 5*)

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY



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INDIA-PAKISTAN

Firing continues along most of the East Pakistani border and there is fighting in several areas. A Pakistani claim to have repulsed five attacks in battalion strength at various points along the border is countered by the Indian assertion of Mukti Bahini success in most of these areas.

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[redacted] Neither side appears to have scored decisive military gains.

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[redacted] the Pakistani Army has had to remain on the defensive in the east because of a shortage of supplies and equipment. The army expects to be able to defend East Pakistan for a month or more and to limit Indian penetration to ten to 15 miles if the Indians do not use air power. If, however, a large area is lost during a major Indian offensive, the Pakistani Eastern Command reportedly believes that an attack on India would immediately be launched from West Pakistan.

Radio Pakistan claimed that yesterday India began a "large-scale new offensive" using two divisions, tanks, artillery, and in one instance air power, attacking into widely separated areas on East Pakistan's northern, northeastern, and western borders. New Delhi, however, has acknowledged only three "defensive" cross-border raids. While the Indians have helped the Mukti Bahini establish footholds inside East Pakistan, New Delhi appears to be carefully orchestrating the level of hostilities in order to force Pakistani President Yahya Khan toward a political settlement of the crisis with the Bengalis.

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[redacted]
During a conversation in Islamabad with US Ambassador Farland on 27 November, Atal said that New Delhi did not consider Mujib to be the one and only key to the crisis and that India did not want the partition of Pakistan. Rather, he said, New Delhi envisioned a "loose confederation" of the two wings as an acceptable solution. To effect this, Atal

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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said that he thought that Mrs. Gandhi, although previously unenthusiastic, would now "look with favor" on a meeting between Islamabad and Bangla Desh representatives.

Atal and the Indian Foreign Ministry have had divergent views on the crisis in the past and a press release from New Delhi on 28 November, stating that Mrs. Gandhi had again called for the immediate release of Mujib, would seem to indicate little softening of the Indian line.

Yahya, meanwhile, is continuing his attempts to internationalize the crisis despite negative attitudes in New Delhi and Moscow. Pakistani Foreign Secretary Sultan Khan told Ambassador Farland yesterday that he had sent a message to UN Secretary General U Thant asking that UN observers be stationed on the East Pakistani border as soon as possible.

New Delhi is opposed to posting UN observers on the Indian side of the border and Yahya's move appears to be designed to thwart Indian cross-border operations as well as to demonstrate Pakistan's "peaceful" intentions.

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JORDAN - ARAB STATES

The immediate effect of the assassination of Jordanian Premier Wasfi Tal yesterday in Cairo will be to stifle any lingering sentiment for accommodation with the fedayeen. Although the group affiliation of Tal's assailants is unknown, the Jordanians doubtless attribute the act to the fedayeen. An intensified campaign to identify and dispose of militant Palestinians is likely, and retaliatory assassination attempts against fedayeen leaders outside the country are possible.

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Tal, who had been opposed by Palestinian groups ever since his appointment in October 1970, was one of the executors of King Husayn's mopping-up campaign against the fedayeen. Tal was in Cairo for meetings of the Arab Defense Council where he presumably presented the Jordanian side in discussions of the problems of the fedayeen. Mediation efforts sponsored by the Saudis and Egyptians had broken down on Friday.

Although Egypt probably was not involved in the slaying, Cairo may be criticized by Amman because of its well-known coolness to Tal, dating from his outspoken opposition to Nasir in the early 1950s. In any case, the incident will further hinder Egyptian efforts to form a united Arab stand against Israel. President Sadat had been using the recent series of Arab ministerial meetings to try to forge a common Arab position in the pending UN General Assembly debate on the Middle East question.

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SOUTHEAST ASIA

The key issue of the recently concluded foreign ministers' meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) concerned the suitability of neutralization as a way of guaranteeing the region's long-term security. As anticipated, Malaysia, the leading exponent of neutralization, was not able to win the support of ASEAN's other members--Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines--for more than a broadly worded communique citing neutralization as a desirable future objective. The misgivings of the Philippines and Thailand, anxious to protect bilateral agreements with the US, and Indonesia, which desires to keep the US involved in the region, were instrumental in blocking Kuala Lumpur's efforts to get a more far-reaching declaration. A committee was appointed to explore the practical problems of neutrality, particularly the selling of the idea to Southeast Asian nations which are not members of ASEAN. Malaysia will push for more concrete steps at an ASEAN "summit" meeting scheduled for Manila next March.

The meeting represents ASEAN's first concrete attempt in its four-year existence to come to grips with a problem of fundamental importance to the region. Despite members' skepticism about implementation, the organization is now on record in favor of the neutralization concept. How it develops will depend largely on the attitudes of the US and other major powers in Asia. Perhaps the most important effect will be to breathe life into ASEAN and encourage the countries in the area to think about the future.

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USSR-EGYPT

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Four more Soviet TU-16 Badger aircraft arrived
at Aswan on 24, 25, and 27 November.

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Of the ten TU-16s that have flown to Aswan since 5 November, five have been positively identified as "G" variants that can carry two AS-5 Kelt air-to-surface missiles. Three others have been identified as missile carriers, and the two that were not seen are probably also missile carriers.

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Total TU-16 strength at Aswan now stands at 13--eight missile carriers, two probable missile carriers, one electronic counter-measures type, and two whose particular mission is unknown. The basing of TU-16 missile aircraft in Egypt gives the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron an additional strike capability.

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